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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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SECRET [redacted]

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1. Although the Soviet people in general believed that V.M. Molotov would head the government after Stalin's death, the Party and the MVD workers were convinced that it would be G.M. Malenkov. The latter had been the Party leader during Stalin's time and had been prominent in Party work, for example, as the first and only speaker at the 19th Party Congress. While Malenkov was sitting with the Presidium at the Congress, Stalin would occasionally come up and speak to him, and Malenkov would answer with two or three words and turn away or say, "I understand". This cooperation and friendliness led all those close to administrative circles to believe that Malenkov would be the new head. This belief existed even though Beriya took over the MVD and despite his speech in the Red Square at Stalin's funeral. The speech was outstanding for its effective presentation of Soviet reality, Stalin's work, and present problems, and it was much better than those made by either Malenkov or Molotov.

2. When Beriya was re-appointed Minister of Internal Affairs, after Stalin's death, all MVD workers thought that the system within the MVD would be much improved. But, when Beriya began to remove leading officials who had served under previous ministers and to replace them with his old cronies, the opinion among the MVD employees was that the best men were being released and replaced by irresponsible persons whom Beriya was drawing from the archives. Many of these replacements had been arrested previously or had been removed from responsible positions because of excessive drinking, as had been the case with Pavel Yakovlevich Meshik in the Ukraine. Another example was Vladimir Georgiyevich Dekanozov, who had been released by Molotov for immoral behavior and subsequently had held a minor position in Moscow as Chief of Supplies in either VOKS or the World Peace Council.

3. If Beriya had been making these changes in order to take over control of the Government, he was doing so with the idea that, since these replacements had been offended by their treatment under the Stalin regime, they would be faithful to Beriya upon their reinstatement in positions of

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authority. However, Beriya's replacements were either his former supporters or persons who were stupid and could be counted upon to follow his orders without question. Fadeykin (fnu) [redacted] was unsuited to his job and incapable of handling a large staff. [redacted] Further dissatisfaction among the MVD workers stemmed from the fact that, when Colonel General Bogdan Zakharovich Kobulov became First Deputy Minister, he showed preference towards the Georgians, Armenians, and other national minorities. For instance, he appointed [redacted] Lieutenant General L.B. Vlodzimirskiy, who had spent some time in prison, and another named Shlyuger (fnu), who had been imprisoned for dereliction of duty. Lieutenant General Belkin was a further example of an appointee whose nationality was other than Russian.[1] All of them were appointed to high positions and their appointments created misunderstandings and unnecessary rumors.

4. [redacted] Beriya had enjoyed a high reputation prior to his taking over the MVD.

5. Beriya exceeded his authority in the following manner. It had been the custom, when a person was appointed to some high position such as section chief of a ministry or higher, that the Chief of the Oblast Directorate of MVD or Kray Directorate would first request Moscow headquarters to approve the appointment. Following this, the CC CPSU, which would make the final decision, would be informed of the proposed appointment. Meanwhile, the appointee would carry out his new functions on a probationary basis and, if his approval by the CC CPSU was not forthcoming, he would be released from his new duties. When Beriya took over, however, he considered that, since he was a member of the Politburo,[2] it was not necessary to inform the Central Committee of such appointments. He would merely call the Chief of the Secretariat and read off a list of new appointments to him. In short, he issued orders and the appointed persons went to their assigned positions. He further issued the order that in all the non-Russian republics of the USSR, and especially in the Latvian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Belorussian, Caucasian and Central Asiatic republics, natives, not Russians, were to be assigned to the top MVD positions. But Beriya received a personal set-back when he went to a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Belorussia and tried to have the CC secretary, Patolichev, fired.[3] Patolichev was a Russian who was on good terms with Malenkov. He had been Secretary in the Central Committee at one time, and had been in Rostov until he replaced Ponomarenko in Belorussia. At the meeting, Beriya declared that Patolichev was a fool, could not perform his duties, and should be replaced by a Belorussian. Patolichev arose and refused to accept the charges made against him because they were false. Beriya stuck to his charges, however; but, when the vote was taken, all were in favor of having Patolichev remain in his position. Beriya also issued verbal orders to all MVD Oblast Directorate Chiefs and MVD Ministers of union republics to maintain surveillance of the Party officials working in their oblasts or areas. One of those to receive such instructions was the Chief of the Kamenets-Podolsk Oblast Directorate, Major General Strokach, who at once either wrote or went to the Oblast Party (Obkom) secretary and said to him, "I do not understand. I received an order by telephone today from Beriya telling me to maintain a check on you."[4] The Party Secretary called the CP of the Ukraine and also called Moscow to inquire on what basis the order for surveillance was made, stating that, if he could not be trusted, he wanted to be told about it and would consequently resign his position.

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6. It was after the Belorussian incident and after Strokach made known the surveillance orders that the CC CPSU decided to place Beriya under surveillance, as it had become clear that he was using the security organs to achieve his own ends. Beriya had also removed the Chief of the Guard Directorate, an official from the CC CPSU who had replaced Vlastikov (fnu), and supplanted him with a Major General Kuzmichev (fnu), whom Beriya had released from prison.

25X1 [redacted]

7. [redacted] late on the night of 26 June, [redacted] tanks cruising around the Mayakovskiy Square and along the Sadovoye Koltso. [redacted] tanks were very unusual in Moscow , being seen in the city only in parades. [redacted] Beriya had been arrested. Soldiers were on guard at the door of Beriya's office. By the end of the day, several officials had learned of the arrest. By evening they learned that Kobulov and others had been arrested, too. [redacted] on the morning of 26 June, Beriya had been called to the Politburo to answer some questions. When he entered the conference room, which was in the Kremlin, Voroshilov entered directly behind him, carrying a warrant for arrest, and declared, "In the name of the USSR, Lavrentiy Pavlovich Beriya is hereby placed under arrest." Beriya was extremely startled, but was finally quieted down and was questioned with regard to the measures he had taken. He was closeted with the Politburo for practically the whole day and was not seen again. He was later removed to Lefortovo prison. Kobulov was arrested at six o'clock that evening by Kruglov and Nikolay Nikolayevich Shatalin. Despite Kobulov's protests that he was only the deputy chief, he was imprisoned.

8. [redacted] tanks that were used on the night of Beriya's arrest [redacted] were from the Kantemirovskaya Division, which had retained its name from the war and was posted near Moscow. However, this division was not part of the Moscow Military District, but may have belonged to some tank command which was directly subordinate to the Ministry of Defense. In command of the Moscow Military District was Artemyev. [redacted] in the case of Moscow, district and garrison are one and the same thing, so that the chief of the Military District would be chief of the Moscow garrison.

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9. Beriya's coup was set for 27 June. Beriya, having won Artemyev over to his cause, instructed him to order all his troops out of the city on maneuvers, thus leaving Beriya's MVD troops in control of the situation.

25X1 [redacted] practically the entire Moscow District garrison went off on maneuvers to Belorussia prior to 26 June. The intended coup was discovered and, in order to nullify any action which the MVD troops might have taken upon Beriya's arrest, Bulganin moved the Kantemirovskaya Division into Moscow as well as some of Marshal S.K. Timoshenko's troops from the Belorussian Military District.

10. [redacted] the MVD troops would have participated to any great extent on Beriya's behalf because the MVD Deputy in charge of troops,

25X1 Army General Maslennikov, still retains that position.[6] A military specialist, Maslennikov was placed in charge of MVD troops after the war and had held that position for four or five years. In any case, after Beriya's arrest, a great many officers in barracks near Moscow were arrested and some were executed. The great majority of those arrested were Army officers. Even some enlisted men suffered in these reprisals. No official announcement was made of Beriya's arrest until 4 or 5 July (sic).[7]

11. Greater panic existed during Beriya's regime than after his arrest. The general feeling among the MVD personnel, many of whom Beriya had mistreated, was that of "good riddance". Many officials close to government circles expected other changes to be made, as it was generally believed that Beriya was not alone in his machinations and that someone inside the Politburo was supporting him. It seemed inconceivable that he would try a coup single-handed, if that was actually what he was trying to do.

12. There was further cause among the MVD workers for dissatisfaction with Beriya. Before he took over there was a great deal of confusion among the MVD organs, which was increased by the doctors' arrest. When Beriya assumed command, a great reduction in personnel occurred, and it was then believed that he was cleaning up the MVD and getting rid of all the undesirables. All those released had great difficulty in obtaining other employment because of questions as to why they had been fired. When Beriya was arrested, MVD personnel who had been fired were again attacked by the public as having been released because they were Beriya men. In any case, the majority of the MVD workers cursed the day when they went to work for the MVD. One man, for example, went to

25X1 Aleksandr Semenovich Panyushkin and asked to be released from the MVD. The disaffected employee told [redacted] that, if he were released, he would take

25X1 his wife and go off into some area far from Moscow, as he never wanted to set foot in Moscow again. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted]

13. Five days after Beriya's arrest, a brief article appeared in the newspapers stating simply that Beriya had surrounded himself with certain persons and that he was suspected of desiring to seize power. The Soviet people were dumbfounded. The news was broken gradually--pictures of Beriya were taken down; but the people were somewhat prepared, as there had been general talk to the effect that "now that Stalin is dead, leaders will fight until one or the other takes over the rule". Following the brief announcement in the papers, a two-column article on Beriya appeared.

14. In order to re-establish the principles of Socialist rule, as announced by the Government, the Secretariat of the Special Council which had been attached to the MVD as an extra-legal court and the Inspektsiya which Beriya had used for checking the work of MVD workers and Party organs were abolished at once. Lt. General Raykhman (fnu), head of the latter, was arrested immediately. His wife, the ballerina Lepeshinskaya,

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had denounced him at the time of a previous arrest, but returned to him upon his release. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] New but experienced persons were sent to work in the MVD and a new procedure of checks and balances was instituted.

25X1 In each Directorate of the MVD, except the SCD (for some reason), a worker from the CC CPSU was assigned. For instance, the chief of the Fifth Directorate is an MVD worker, but his deputy was from the CC. In each oblast and in each republic the chief is now an MVD worker experienced in operational work and his deputy is a Party worker.

15. After Beriya's arrest, a meeting was held in each section of the MVD and a brief statement was given concerning the arrest. Savchenko, Deputy Chief of the SCD and Chief of the Sovetnicheskiy Otdel, made the statement explaining that Beriya had been found to be a traitor, an enemy of the people, and as a result had been arrested.[8] These meetings were held after the initial announcement was made by the press. Before the story was published, not a word was mentioned to anyone about the arrest. Work papers were no longer being channeled to Beriya at this time, because an announcement had already been made to the effect that Kruglov was the new Minister, with Shatalin and Serov as deputies. No explanation of the change accompanied the announcement. For about three days, however, the MVD workers had no idea who their minister or deputy

25X1 ministers were. [redacted] the morning after the arrest, not all officials learned of it the first day. By the second day, however, everybody in the central apparat of the MVD knew about it. Savchenko's statement did not throw any new light on the incident, as he did not include any comments other than those which had appeared in the brief newspaper account.

16. Approximately five days after the newspaper article and following Savchenko's statement, there was held a general meeting of all the workers in the Directorate, the subject of which was "The Tasks of the Second Chief Directorate". Kruglov, Ivan Aleksandrovich Serov, and Panyushkin were all present. The meeting lasted for four or five hours. As is usually the custom at large meetings, the presidium was not elected, but the chiefs of sections and the Party secretaries sat at the presidium table. After Kruglov, the first speaker, had discussed the damage to intelligence work caused by Beriya's removal of responsible officials, it was announced that Panyushkin would be chief of the SCD, and he was introduced by Kruglov. Up to this time Colonel Aleksandr Mikhailovich Korotkov had been Chief of the SCD. Panyushkin did not speak a word at the meeting and merely stood up when he was introduced.

17. At the conclusion of Kruglov's speech, the chairman asked who wished to take the floor and those desiring to speak raised their hands. Korotkov spoke next and was followed by Savchenko. Then all of the MVD workers who wished to speak submitted their requests on slips of paper to the chairman. Those turning in their slips first were the first to speak. However, since there were five or more requests from some sections, the chairman insured that at least one representative from each section had a chance to be heard. From among the volunteers, fifteen or sixteen persons spoke. General questions directed to various MVD officials were delivered from the floor. For example: "I would like to have Savchenko explain why he did not report to the CC when he knew what was going on." Savchenko explained that he had objected to the replacements both in the field and in Moscow headquarters, but that Beriya had told him to get out. He added, "As you all know, I was demoted from Deputy Minister to Chief of Section." This was a true fact and no further questions were directed at Savchenko. Another question was directed at Fedoseyev (fnu) by one of his own workers, who said, "Fedoseyev told me in confidence that Beriya had given him a special assignment to visit Tito. What was that special assignment?" Fedoseyev made no attempt to answer this question; in fact, he did not even get up from where he was sitting at the back of the room.

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Kruglov got up and explained that Fedoseyev had actually received such orders from Beriya and that the letter to Tito had been found in Beriya's safe. This was all that was said on this subject, nor were the contents of the letter mentioned. Two or three days after the conference, Fedoseyev was released from his job, though he was not arrested. It was thought that he was not arrested because he was ailing and did not have long to live. Another question was directed at the deputy minister, Colonel Arseniy Tishkov, who was asked to explain the special assignment he had received from Beriya. This question brought attacks from all sides and generally threw the meeting into an uproar. Members stamped their feet and applauded and Tishkov left the stage. Korotkov was also berated at the meeting , as he had been the only high official whom Beriya had retained in office. In addition, he had sent all the good workers into the field because he was incapable of keeping them at headquarters, and he did not report the changes in personnel to the CC. Korotkov turned red with embarrassement, but pointed out that he could not do anything to prevent what was happening. By this he meant that, had he tried to oppose Beriya in anyway, he would have been removed. Colonel Yevgeniy Ignatyevich Kovalev spoke very well and was applauded.

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20. The purge within the MVD organizations following Beriya's arrest continued for two months and affected all the top personnel, chiefs of sections, chiefs of directorates, deputy chiefs and chiefs of Glavki. All the others remained on the job. Six persons were arrested with Beriya. Approximately two weeks later Raykhman was removed from his post and was arrested two weeks after that. Shlyuger was at first relieved of duties, and was later arrested. Savchenko continued to work for a long time following Beriya's arrest and was then pensioned off, having served for 35 years.

25X1

25X1 Among others who were arrested were: Lieutenant General Milshteyn (fnu), Deputy Minister of the MVD; Lieutenant

25X1 General Sudoplatov, Chief of SpetsByuro No. 1;[10] Major General Yetingon, Deputy Chief of SpetsByuro No. 1;[11] Lieutenant General Belkin, former Chief of the Counterintelligence Directorate, Central Group of Forces; Lyudvigov, Chief of the MVD Secretariat; Lieutenant General Rukhadze, Chief of the Counterintelligence Directorate of the Transcaucasus Military District; Colonel Sarkisov, chief of Beriya's personal guard; Colonel Karasëv, Chief of 2nd Special Section; and Major General Kuzmichev, Chief of the Ninth Directorate. The following were relieved of their duties: Lieutenant General Sazykin, Chief of the Fourth Directorate; Colonel Fedoseyev, Deputy Chief of the Second Chief Directorate; Colonel Pisarev, former chief of B section; Colonel Agayants, Deputy Chief of the Fifth Directorate;[12] and the lieutenant general (lnu)who was Chief of the Personnel Directorate. Major General Utekhin, Deputy Chief of the Fourth Directorate, was demoted to a minor position in Chelyabinsk.

21. most of the MVD personnel were inclined to believe that Beriya's activities represented his intention to overthrow

25X1 the present government rather than just indicating a struggle for power. National feelings, however, played a vital part in influencing thinking and opinions. Nevertheless, even though many in the country may have thought Beriya to be a good worker, now that he was gone, it was felt that it would be better to have a Russian in his place. The majority of the people approved of Beriya's arrest, though no one said so openly.

22. There was also some thought that Malenkov and Molotov had succeeded in getting rid of Beriya. Beriya had been blackmailing Molotov during the last two years of Stalin's life because of something which Molotov's wife had done. Molotov's position was on the third level, below Malenkov and Bulganin. Beriya was also heard to remark that Molotov was a nonentity and that his affected way of talking (kartavit) did not make

25X1 him better than anyone else. Beriya was collecting information, to be published at a later date, on all the members of the Politburo and on

25X1 one in particular. Though the name of this person was never mentioned publicly, it was

25X1 Molotov

23. Two or three days after the Directorate meeting there was another meeting, for partiynyy aktiv of the whole Ministry, which was attended by the Party secretaries, secretaries of all organizations, and all top MVD personnel. Both Shatalin and Serov spoke. The former's speech did not come up to expectation and it seemed to all that he was very dry and distant. He was asked, "Comrade Shatalin , it appears that you are both Deputy Minister and Party Secretary. Or are you merely Party Secretary?" He replied that he was both. Shatalin stayed with the MVD for a month and then returned to the CC CPSU.

24. Lunev appeared on the horizon in September 1953.[13] He had worked in the CC and it was believed that he had been the second secretary of the Moscow Party Committee. Lunev probably did not hold any military grade, and in the announcement of his appointment it was simply stated that Lunev was First Deputy Minister.

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25. During this period Beriya was being held and interrogated in the Lefortovo Prison, the MVD prison. The MVD possessed the Lefortovo, Butyrskaya, and Internal prisons; the latter is located in the main MVD building. The Chief Prosecutor of the USSR, Rudenko, and his staff were responsible for the interrogation and, while it was necessary to use some experienced MVD investigators, the case was not handled by the MVD the Chief of Special Investigations was Kozyrev.

26. The publication stated that the case would be investigated and turned over to the Supreme Court and it was never known whether the case would be conducted behind closed doors or in open court. At the time, however, it was stated that the hearing would be held by the military court in closed session. open sessions could have been held, but they were not because of the Government's fear of publicizing Beriya's immoral behavior and revealing to the public what was taking place on high government levels. Moreover, in view of the fact that this had become international news and that the struggle for power was a publicized fact, it was felt that, if any derogatory information were made public, the outside world would pick it up and point to the type of men in power in the USSR.

27. According to the document signed by Rudenko, Beriya had not confessed guilt to any of the charges placed against him. Although the Soviet press reported that Beriya had admitted his guilt, it was only on small points of evidence, the proof of which had already been established, that he had admitted his guilt. Beriya was unwilling to confess and confined his answers , when given, to merely "yes" or "no" responses. It was also rumored that at first he refused to answer any questions and went on a hunger strike

28. another reason for dislike of Beriya was that the life in Georgia was easier and more favorable than anywhere else in the USSR. Taxes and the norms in the factories were lower. Before Beriya's arrest, the Georgians threatened to kill all the Russians in their country, but after his arrest they claimed that he was a Mingrelian and not a Georgian.

once Beriya had been removed from office, it was a good thing, and a Russian should replace him. After all, Beriya had started the nationalistic policy.

29. many thought that the period between Beriya's arrest and his execution would be longer, as there were many serious matters involved that had to be cleared up.

Comment:

1. Lieutenant General Mikhail Ilyich Belkin.

2. uses Politburo throughout instead of Presidium.

3. Nikolay Semenovich Patolichev.

4. Timofey Amvroseyevich Strokach, now Minister of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR.

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5. Colonel General Pavel Artemyevich Artemyev
6. Ivan Ivanovich Maslennikov
7. 10 July
8. Lieutenant General Sergey Romanovich Savchenko
9. Possibly Valentin Ilyich Kiryukhin
10. Pavel Anatoliyevich Sudoplatov
11. Leonid Aleksandrovich Yetingon
12. Brother of Lieutenant Colonel Ivan Ivanovich Agayants
13. K. E. Lunev, First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs

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